

## Welcome to our new readers

Dear readers,

The *Militant* is extending a warm welcome to the 1,924 people who subscribed to the socialist newsweekly for the first time or renewed their subscription over the five weeks of the just completed successful international circulation campaign.

The majority subscribed when readers of the paper stopped by their door in working-class neighborhoods in cities, towns and rural areas across the United States and elsewhere, from Australia and New Zealand to Canada and the United Kingdom.

A number of new subscribers were introduced to the paper on picket lines and labor rallies as part of battles against the boss and government attacks on wages, working conditions, union protections and our very dignity. Among them were school bus workers in New York; longshore workers on the East, West and Gulf coasts; food warehouse workers in Washington state; hotel workers in Quebec. Others signed up at social protest actions from fights against police brutality to demonstrations for rights of immigrants.

Twenty subscribers during the campaign are workers behind bars—not only among the more than 2 million locked up in the United States, but also in New Zealand. Bringing the *Militant's* fighting working-class perspective to readers in prison was made possible by contributions from readers to the *Militant Prisoners' Fund*, and what money inmates are able to put together. The paper gets read and discussed, these subscribers remind us from time to time, by many fellow inmates in study groups and informal settings.

Continued on page 3

## Postal workers protest plan to cut Sat. delivery

More than 193,000 jobs slashed since 2006



March 24 protest at main post office in New York City against plans to end Saturday delivery. "This is about greed," said postal clerk James Moore. "They tell workers 'do more with less.'" Militant/Dan Fein

BY NORTON SANDLER

LOS ANGELES—Postal workers and their supporters rallied in hundreds of cities from California to New York March 24 to protest plans to eliminate Saturday delivery.

The actions were initiated by the National Association of Letter Carriers. The protest in the Hollywood neighborhood here drew some 600 participants from Los Angeles and the surrounding area. Among the participants were members of the American Postal Workers Union, which organizes clerks and other post office workers, and other trade unionists.

"We have to fight to keep the six-

day mail delivery. If we don't, where will it stop? Four days, three days?" postal worker Connie Callegari told the *Militant* at the protest.

Continued on page 12

## Cease-fire deal registers gains for Kurds in Turkey, opening for toilers of region

BY LOUIS MARTIN

An agreement ending decades of military conflict between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Turkish government registers some gains for the Kurdish people

## Cyprus crisis: working people across Europe will bear brunt

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The banking crisis in Cyprus has shaken confidence not only in the banks of Cyprus, but those of other heavily-indebted nations in Europe, from Greece to Spain and Italy. It has brought the inherent contradictions of the eurozone—a monetary union among nation states with separate interests and disparate levels of development—into sharper relief. And it will accelerate an economic contraction that together with looming government austerity measures will bear down hard on Cypriot working people.

Banks have been shut tight in Cyprus since March 16 after government officials announced they planned to move ahead with demands from the European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund and European Commission—often referred to as the "troika"—to tax all accounts in Cypriot banks as a condition for securing \$13 billion in loans to stave off a total collapse of the

Continued on page 12

and a political opening for toilers in the region.

The Kurds are an oppressed nationality of some 25 to 30 million people concentrated in eastern Turkey, northwest Iran, northern Iraq and northern Syria. About half live in Turkey, where they face the highest rates of illiteracy and poverty in the country.

On March 21, after months of negotiations with the Turkish government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan called for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of all combatants from Turkish soil. The announcement was

Continued on page 4

## 'Through worldwide solidarity, we can bring the Cuban Five home'



Meeting of some 100 people Feb. 21 during Havana International Book Fair discussed how to use *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free* as part of worldwide fight to win release of Cuban revolutionaries held for nearly 15 years in U.S. prisons. Coverage of event and excerpts from speeches appear on pages 7 through 11. Prensa Latina/Vladimir Molina

### Also Inside:

NY trial opens on cops' stop-and-frisk practices	2
New abortion restrictions in N Dakota, Arkansas	2
NY bus companies slash wages after strike	5
Organized labor must fight for entire working class	6

# NY trial opens on cops' stop-and-frisk practices

BY EMMA JOHNSON

NEW YORK—A lawsuit challenging "stop-and-frisk" practices of the New York Police Department for unconstitutional arbitrary stops and searches targeting Black and Latino men on the street went to court here March 18.

The federal class-action suit was filed in 2008 by the Center for Constitutional Rights on behalf of four Black men: David Floyd, 28, studying medicine in Cuba, but originally from the Bronx; Lalit Clarkson, 26, and Deon Dennis, 37, both from Harlem; and David Ourlicht, 20, from Jamaica, Queens.

New Yorkers have been stopped and interrogated close to 5 million times between 2002 and 2012. In 2002 there were 97,000 stops. Last year it was 533,000. While the total numbers have risen, the racially disproportionate character has remained constant—about 54 percent are Black, 32 percent Latino, and about half are between the ages of 14 and 24. These figures also apply to neighborhoods where the Black and Latino population is 15 percent and less.

"How often am I stopped? I'd say about three times a week," said Michael Castro, 21, taking a break from a basketball game outside several high-rise apartment buildings on Lincoln Avenue in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn March 24. "It happens to all of us. Same questions every time, 'Do we have guns? Do we have drugs?' And it's the same cops doing it."

East New York, a predominantly Black and Latino area, has the highest number of stop and frisks in the city.

"It's a difficult question," said Elijah

Harrison, a 20-year-old African-American, who lives in one of the high rises. "I don't have much personal experience. I'm not against stop and frisk, but I don't like the way they're doing it. I do know it's racial profiling and I'm against that. Nobody likes that."

At the trial, Michael Marino, commanding officer in the 75th Precinct, which covers East New York, explained to the court that he "set numbers" for how many arrests and stop and frisks he wanted per month.

Two active duty Bronx cops testified against the NYPD with details of quotas and racial profiling of male Black and Latino youth. One of them, Pedro Serrano, taped a discussion with his commanding officer, Christopher McCormack. The tape was played in court March 21 and you hear him telling Serrano to stop "the right people, the right time, the right location. ... The problem was, what, male Blacks. And I told you at roll call, and I have no prob-



New York Daily News

New York cops conduct stop and frisk in stairwell of Harlem apartment building in January.

lem telling you this, male Blacks 14 to 20, 21."

Lawyers for the defense argue the NYPD is targeting crimes, not minorities.

About 10 percent of stops result in charges, many for possession of small quantities of marijuana. A report released March 20 by the Drug Policy

Alliance and the Marijuana Arrest Research Project said of the more than 440,000 marijuana possession arrests in New York City over the last 11 years, nearly 70 percent were under 30 years of age and more than 85 percent Black and Latino. According to the report, surveys indicate use of the drug is most prevalent among Caucasian youth.

## New abortion restrictions passed in N Dakota, Arkansas

BY SUSAN LAMONT

The North Dakota and Arkansas state legislatures recently adopted measures aimed at further restricting access to abortion. Both states have only one clinic that performs abortions.

One of the North Dakota bills passed March 15 would ban most abortions after six weeks, when fetal heartbeats can be detected using an intrusive transvaginal ultrasound. At six weeks, many women are not even aware of pregnancy.

Doctors who perform abortions in violation of the new limits could face felony charges and up to five years' imprisonment.

A second measure passed the same day would ban abortions based on genetic abnormalities or sex.

The North Dakota Legislature approved measures March 22 to prohibit all abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy and to require doctors performing abortions to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. It also approved holding a statewide referendum in 2014, seeking approval to amend the state constitution to include language upholding the "right to life ... at any stage of development." A similar "personhood" initiative was voted down in Mississippi in November 2011.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed three of the measures March 26. The ban on abortions after 20 weeks is pending.

"We're trying to form one strong group to oppose this legislation," said Jen Hoy of Stand Up for Women North

Dakota, in a phone interview from Fargo. The group, formed in early March, organized rallies to oppose the proposed anti-abortion bills March 25 in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot. "It's important for abortion to be a safe and legal choice for women. If they take it away, women will have to go back to dangerous, illegal abortions. If these laws pass here, it will make it easier for other states to do the same."

The Arkansas Legislature adopted a bill March 6 that would ban abortions after 12 weeks, when a fetal heartbeat can be detected using abdominal ultrasound, a less invasive procedure than transvaginal ultrasound. The legislature overrode an earlier veto by Democratic Gov. Mike Beebe, who called the measure "blatantly unconstitutional."

The Center for Reproductive Rights in New York and the American Civil Liberties Union say they will challenge the law in federal court before it takes effect, 90 days after the Legislature adjourns in the coming weeks.

# THE MILITANT

## Support struggles by immigrant workers!

**The 'Militant' backs the April 10 demonstration 'Citizenship for 11 million. The time is now!' in Washington, D.C. The fight for rights of immigrant workers is a crucial aspect of the struggle to unify and strengthen the working class and labor movement.**



Militant/Betsy Farley  
March and rally in Chicago March 10 demanding equal rights for immigrant workers.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

# Welcome, new readers



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Truck driver Jorge Vega, left, renews subscription when SWP candidates Michael Fitzsimmons, running for Houston mayor, and Cindy Jaquith, for city council, knock on his door March 17.

## Continued from front page

Hundreds also bought copies of books on revolutionary working-class politics offered at reduced prices with a subscription. These offers are still valid and I urge you to take advantage of them to get other titles. (See ad below.)

The *Militant* explains the roots of the capitalist crisis, why the bosses won't stop attacking us, and why workers, along with farmers and other allies, need to build a revolutionary movement of millions to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist class and begin reorganizing society to meet the needs of the toiling majority.

The 2013 winter campaign is over. But the effort to expand the working-class readership of the paper continues.

"Following the recently completed drive, supporters of the *Militant* in Los Angeles had a good weekend of activities," wrote Arlene Rubinstein.

These *Militant* supporters, she said, joined two United Farmworkers actions in Coachella Valley and Oxnard, as well as a protest by postal workers in Los Angeles, selling a total of 17 subscriptions and four books.

Introduce the paper to your friends, relatives and fellow workers. You can call distributors in your area (see directory on page 6). Or order a bundle at [themilitant@mac.com](mailto:themilitant@mac.com) or (212) 244-4899. And be sure to renew your subscription before it runs out!

In solidarity,  
Louis Martin  
Circulation director

## Omaha socialist candidate joins postal protest



Militant/Alex Huinil

OMAHA, Neb.—Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Omaha City Council District 4, addresses March 24 rally of postal workers here protesting plans to cut service to five days a week. "This rally is an example of the kind of protests we need more of," Perasso said. "In the factories we are also working faster and longer hours. The bosses are driving down our standard of living. We need to build a movement to fight against this." Perasso called for a public works program to put millions to work at union-scale wages.

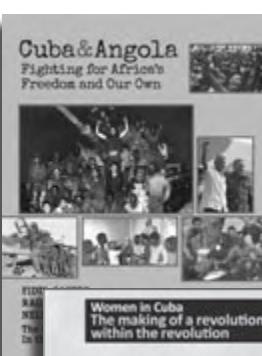
—LAURA GARZA

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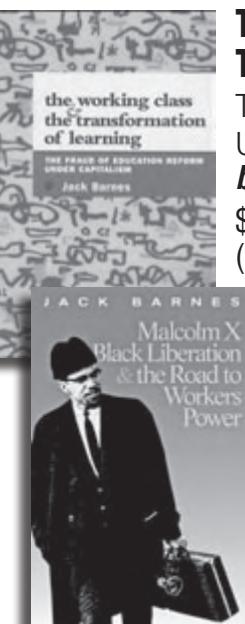
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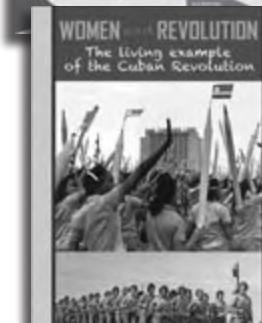
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**See distributors on page 6**

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*by Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro; Cuban generals and combatants; Gabriel García Márquez*

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*by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer*

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*from pages of the 'Militant'*

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Enduring trade and shared concerns on Syria behind Israel-Turkey 'thaw'

BY SETH GALINSKY

At the end of President Barack Obama's two-day trip to Israel, he was able to claim credit for brokering an end to a dispute between the Israeli and Turkish governments. The *New York Times* said it "may be the only immediate, concrete achievement" Obama can claim from his visit to U.S. imperialism's key ally in the Middle East.

Relations between Tel Aviv and

Ankara froze after May 2010 when Israeli special forces raided the *Mavi Marmara*, a Turkish ship symbolically attempting to break Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip, killing nine participants.

With or without Obama, it's clear relations between the two governments would thaw. Although Ankara downgraded diplomatic relations and suspended all military agreements with Israel when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refused to apologize for the raid, trade and business between the two Middle Eastern nations continued as usual.

In 2011 imports to Turkey from Israel reached \$2 billion, an all-time high, and nearly 200 Israeli firms were investing there. Exports to Israel reached \$2.4 billion.

In a 30-minute phone call with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Obama's last day in Israel, March 22, Netanyahu apologized for "any mistakes that might have led to the loss of life or injury." He pledged to pay compensation to the victims' families, and said Israel would relax its blockade of Palestinians living in Gaza "should the situation allow it." Both leaders agreed to normalize relations and dispatch ambassadors.

Erdogan's government is playing a key role in funneling arms and ammunition, including from the CIA, to Syrian rebels fighting the brutal tyranny of Bashar al-Assad. Both Tel Aviv and Ankara share borders with Syria and are concerned about the ongoing civil war's impact on stable capitalist relations in the region and the type of government that might succeed Assad.

"The fact that the Syrian crisis is constantly intensifying was a prime consideration," Netanyahu wrote on his Facebook page after talking with Erdogan. "Changing reality requires that we reexamine our relations with countries in the region."

Continued on page 4

# Cease-fire gain for Kurds

Continued from front page

confirmed two days later from Iraq by PKK's field commander, Murat Karayilan. No date has been set for the troops' withdrawal.

In 1984 the PKK, a political party of Maoist origins, opened armed struggle against the Turkish government, which unleashed brutal repression against the Kurdish population. Tens of thousands were killed over the following decades.

In 1999 Ocalan was captured and imprisoned by the Turkish government, which until now has rebuffed offers to negotiate with the PKK. Much of the PKK retreated to northern Iraq following Washington's overthrow of the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The end of Hussein's reign of genocidal terror against the Kurds, the establishment of the semi-autonomous Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq, and new openings for the Kurdish struggle were among the unintended consequences of the U.S. war.

Ocalan's call was made public at a rally of hundreds of thousands of Kurds in the town of Diyarbakir in southern Turkey, on the occasion of Nawroz, a spring holiday opening the first day of the Persian calendar. Pro-Kurdish legislators read his statement in both Kurdish and Turkish amid what the *Financial Times* described as "scenes of mass jubilation."

"Let the guns go silent, let ideas speak," reads the statement. "This does not mean giving up this struggle. It means starting a new phase."

"I see the statement as a positive development," Erdogan commented from the Netherlands, where he was on a state visit. "Implementation, however, is much more important."

Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party in 2009 began easing some of its onerous restrictions on use of the Kurdish language and names in what his government dubbed a "democratic opening," aimed at establishing more political stability in the Kurdish region and ending a protracted armed conflict increasingly at odds with the interests of the Turkish rulers.

The Kurds have a long history of struggle against subjugation and for their own country—Kurdistan. Conquered by ruling empires of the

past, the Kurds' fight for self-determination was suppressed by British and French imperialism that came to dominate the region, as well as by succeeding bourgeois regimes within the borders carved out by the imperialist powers.

Negotiations between Ocalan and the Erdogan government reportedly started in earnest last November, after Ocalan called off a 67-day hunger strike by hundreds of Kurdish prisoners in what was seen as a demonstration of his lasting leadership of the Kurdish struggle.

The hunger strikers demanded the right to defend themselves in court in Kurdish, the right of their children to be educated in Kurdish and the right for Ocalan to see his counsel, which he had been denied for 15 months.

On Jan. 17 the burial in Diyarbakir of three women members of the PKK, murdered in Paris the week before, became a massive demonstration of support for the peace talks. While no one claimed the killings, they were widely seen as an attempt to derail negotiations. Sakine Cansiz, one of the women, was a founding leader of the PKK and a close ally of Ocalan.

## Demands for Kurdish autonomy

The Erdogan government is now expected to make the next move. While the PKK has abandoned its initial call for independence from Turkey, it continues to press for a degree of Kurdish autonomy and national rights—including local governance, language rights and education in Kurdish, development of Kurdish areas and freedom for thousands of Kurdish political prisoners.



Reuters/Umit Bektas

Hundreds of thousands of Kurds rally in Turkish city of Diyarbakir March 21 during annual Nawroz celebration. Statement by imprisoned Kurdistan Workers Party leader Abdullah Ocalan calling for cease-fire and withdrawal of combatants from Turkey was read there.

The *Times* reported March 21 that "the ruling party and the pro-Kurdish forces in parliament are discussing a new constitution that could meet a long standing Kurdish demand by separating the definition of Turkish citizenship from ethnicity."

The prospect of bringing an end to three decades of bloody war with Ankara's restive Kurdish population reflects the Turkish rulers' broader regional concerns.

The Turkish border with war-ravaged Syria is Kurdish land. "Ankara is painfully aware that a PKK affiliate has established a strong presence in the border lands of Syria," the *Times* said March 19.

The same article reported that Ankara has been negotiating with the Kurdistan Regional Government for a large-scale deal in which state-owned companies could take big stakes in the

oil and gas fields in the region, despite furious objections by Baghdad and warnings by Washington." According to the paper, about one out of every two foreign businesses in the north of Iraq is Turkish-owned.

"We not only support and welcome this call by Mr. Ocalan, we believe that this is the right course of action and a vindication of our long-standing policy that the Kurdish question is a political issue and that this question cannot be resolved through armed or military means," said Kurdistan Regional President Masoud Barzani in a March 24 statement.

Both Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the other main bourgeois political party in Iraqi Kurdistan, have sought to end the armed struggle with Turkey and marginalize the PKK's influence.

# Trade, Syria concerns behind Israel-Turkey 'thaw'

Continued from page 3

Although Netanyahu does not spell it out, the "changing reality" is not just the civil war in Syria, but the continuing Arab revolution that has toppled governments and opened up space for working people from Tunisia to Egypt and beyond and affected politics in Israel as well.

Obama's visit to Israel pleased

some conservatives, unlike his June 2009 speech in Cairo. Writing in the March 25 online *Commentary* magazine, conservative historian Max Boot complained that in the 2009 speech, Obama "seemed to equate Jewish suffering in the Holocaust with Palestinian suffering 'in pursuit of a homeland.'"

Boot noted that Obama expressed "sympathy and admiration for Israel" during his March 21 speech in Jerusalem. Obama told the crowd at the International Convention Center that "Palestinians must recognize that Israel will be a Jewish state." He also said that he is for an "independent Palestine" with "real borders." Both statements were applauded by the mostly student crowd.

But not everyone was pleased. "He talked about having separate countries for Jews and Arabs," a young Arab woman told the *Times of Israel*. "That means we must leave Israel."

In an article in *Haaretz* newspaper that same day, Ari Shavit, a member of the paper's editorial board, criticized the Israeli government for not taking steps to negotiate with Palestinian leaders of the Israeli-dominated West Bank. He said they are "feeling, thinking and behaving as though [Israel] is no longer located in West Asia and can exist as an island that has broken off from it. As if there was no Arab world, no Palestine, no Iran. No Arabs, no settlers, no occupation."

Israel is not an island, Shavit wrote,

"Certainly not a nation of eight million Israelis surrounded by 350 million Arabs. Certainly not a nation in which six million Jews share the land with more than five million Palestinians. Certainly not a nation that insists, even in the second decade of the third millennium, on occupying another nation."

## Five Days for the Cuban Five Washington, D.C. May 30 - June 5

Events include:  
**Rally in front of the White House  
Sat., June 1, 1 p.m.**

A variety of presentations, cultural activities and panel discussions will take place during the five days. Speakers and participants will include Angela Davis, Father Miguel D'Escoto, Ignacio Ramonet, Dolores Huerta, Danny Glover, Saul Landau, Cuban Five lead lawyer Martin Garbus, and many others.

For complete schedule and more information visit [www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org)

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**Postal Workers Under Attack.** Speakers: Barbara Bowman, Socialist Workers Party; Kevin Cole, shop steward, American Postal Workers Union Local 917. Sat., April 6, 7:30 p.m. 4025 S. Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**Lift Sanctions Against North Korea! Korea Is One!** Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 5, 7:30 p.m. 7100 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 306A. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Lift the Sanctions! Korea Is One!** Speaker: David Rosenfeld, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Des Moines City Council, Ward 3. Fri., April 5, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 707-1779.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Challenges Facing the Labor Movement Today.** Fri., April 5, 7:30 p.m. 307 W. 36th St.,

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**The Working Class, Labor, Socialist Alternative in the Houston Elections.** Speakers: Michael Fitzsimmons, SWP candidate for Houston mayor; others. Sat., April 6. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-50L. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own.** Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League, volunteer at Pathfinder stall at February Havana book fair. Fri., April 5, 7 p.m. Donation: \$4 waged, \$2 unwaged. *Upstairs*, 281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### Manchester

**End All Sanctions Against North Korea and Iran! Korea Is One!** Speaker: Catharina Tirsén, Communist League. Sat., April 6, 6 p.m. Donation: £2.50. Room 301, Hilton House, 26-28 Hilton St., M1 2EH. Tel.: (0161) 478-2496.

# Coal miners call April 1 rally to protest pension, health cuts

Patriot Coal uses bankruptcy to tear up union contracts

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

ST. LOUIS—Some 1,000 working and retired members of the United Mine Workers of America and their supporters packed an outdoor arena across the street from Peabody Energy's corporate headquarters here March 19 to protest moves to cut thousands of miners off health and pension plans and tear up union contracts. Speakers at the event urged everyone to build a big rally and march April 1 in Charleston, W.Va.

In 2007 Peabody Energy spun off most of its union mines to form Patriot Coal Corp. A year later Patriot bought Magnum Coal Co., an Arch Coal spin-off that operates a dozen mines. More than 90 percent of "Patriot" retirees today never actually worked for Patriot.

As part of its bankruptcy proceedings, Patriot Coal on March 14 asked a judge to sanction its plan to gut union contracts and end benefits covering 10,000 retirees and their 13,000 dependents. The move could amount to a death sentence for older miners, many of whom have black lung and other debilitating work injuries and depend on "lifetime benefits" set down in UMWA contracts since the 1940s.

"Patriot wants to redo the whole contract, wages and benefits and they want to do away with us," James Gibbs, UMWA international vice president, told the *Militant*. Mining company "Alpha is waiting to see what happens with this, Consol is waiting. They thought we were so small we can't fight, but we can fight and we will."

"The Company can no longer afford to pay above-market wages and benefits to its 1,600 union employees as compared to its 1,300 nonunion miners doing exactly the same jobs," Patriot Chief Executive Officer Bennett Hatfield said in a March 14 press statement.

This move takes place in the context of a recent contraction in domestic demand for coal, fueled in large part by falling natural gas prices. Today there are about 82,000 active miners in the U.S., down from some 89,000 in January of last year. About one-quarter of working miners are organized by the UMWA, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, far lower than the proportion decades ago.

In place of the current retiree health plan, responsible for \$1.6 billion in benefits, Patriot is pushing a trust tied to "profit sharing" with a maximum fund of \$300 million.

Gibbs said the union has reserved

43 buses for the April 1 action, which will start with a 10 a.m. rally at the Charleston Civic Center, followed by a march to Patriot Coal's office. April 1 is Mitchell Day, a paid holiday for UMWA members and traditionally a day of miners' union actions.

"We have to support the older guys," Greg Stewart, 25, who works at Patriot-owned Federal No. 2 Mine near Morgantown, W.Va., told the *Militant*. "But we're not just fighting for them, we're fighting for ourselves."

"The mine that I worked for closed down in 1999 and reopened nonunion five years later," said David Beck, from Linton, Ind. "Now Peabody put all of us into Patriot. Peabody is still going big, but the Patriot mine is going bankrupt."

## Mine deaths on the rise

Meanwhile, eight coal miners have been killed on the job in less than three months this year, as bosses go after unions and safety protections.

The latest was Elam Jones, 29, who was killed March 22 when a thick slab fell



Militant/Alyson Kennedy

March 19 St. Louis rally protests Patriot Coal's use of bankruptcy to gut pensions and medical benefits for thousands of miners and their dependents and to tear up union contracts.

on him at the Rhino Resource Partners mine in Bear Canyon near Huntington, Utah. Rhino bought the mine in 2010 from C.W. Mining. Previously known as the Co-Op mine, it was the site of a union-organizing battle in 2003-2004.

Rhino had been carrying out a dangerous operation known as "retreat" mining, which involves extracting coal

from pillars that support the roof. Just miles from Rhino, six miners and three rescuers were killed in an August 2007 collapse at the Crandall Canyon Mine caused by retreating mining.

On March 13, Asa Fitzpatrick, 63, was killed when a slab of rock fell on him at the Patriot-owned Peerless Rachel Mine near Racine, W.Va.

## NY school bus companies slash wages after strike

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—Five weeks after 8,800 members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1181 ended a monthlong strike here, school bus companies are going after union contracts with a vengeance.

The bus companies announced March 22 that they are eliminating two weeks of paid spring and Christmas vacation and that starting April 15 they will impose a 7.5 percent wage cut and require workers to pay more for health insurance. Some companies have announced layoffs.

Neither Jeffrey Pollack, an attorney for the bus companies, nor Atlantic Express, one of the largest bus companies, returned calls for comment.

"It's like someone threw cold water on us," Carmen Valdez, a bus attendant at Atlantic Express, said by phone

March 23. "Our spring vacation starts on Monday, and what a surprise, they gave us one check instead of the usual two. You can imagine! After more than four weeks on strike and people still behind on their bills."

Local 1181 members went on strike Jan. 16 after city officials and the bus company owners claimed Employee Protection Provisions in place for more than 34 years were now "illegal." Under the provisions, private companies, which the city hires to transport students, were required to hire laid-off workers by seniority and at their previous wages, before hiring off the street.

Local 1181 members staffed spirited picket lines during the strike and won sympathy from workers throughout the city. But more than 3,000 members of Teamsters Local 854, United Craft and Industrial Workers Union Local 91 and

United Service Workers Union Local 355 crossed the picket lines, weakening the strike.

Amalgamated Transit Union officials announced the end of the strike Feb. 15, pointing to promises from Democratic Party contenders in the November mayoral election to "revisit" the union's concerns.

The bosses "said 'you'll survive, you guys will still have a job'" in response to the coming pay cuts, said Noemí Topete, a bus attendant at Logan Transportation. "Then the next day there's a letter attached to the bottom of our checks saying we were being laid off permanently in June. All 57 of us gone."

Local 1181 officials have filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board against 60 bus companies for bargaining in bad faith and asking for an injunction against the wage and benefit cuts.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 8, 1988

More than a million Black workers in South Africa joined a nationwide strike on March 21 to commemorate the murder of 69 Blacks in Sharpeville in 1960. They were killed when police opened fire on a crowd protesting South Africa's pass laws. This law required Blacks to carry a passbook at all times, indicating the bearer's identity, place of birth, employment, and length of time permitted to be in "white areas."

Following the massacre the apartheid regime carried out a crackdown on its opponents throughout the country.

This strike is significant in light of the Feb. 24 decree of the regime banning virtually all activities of the major anti-apartheid organizations. The decree singled out the 1 million member Congress of South African Trade Unions.



April 8, 1963

In the four years since the Cuban Revolution came to power, the Cuban people have become not only the first in Latin America to conquer illiteracy, but the first to set up a public-health system making medical attention available to the entire population. One very tangible result has been the elimination of new cases of polio from the country.

Not a single case of polio has appeared since May 1962.

No other Latin American country makes medical treatment available to the entire population, regardless of how humble or isolated people may be. The job of immunization and health inspection is accomplished through the mass organizations of the revolution, but particularly by mobilization of the youth, who go into the country's remotest areas to make sure everyone is immunized.



April 9, 1938

JACKSON, Mich.—The first major use of the sit-down tactic in many months won workers striking against Consumers Power Co. a partial victory when the C.I.O. Utility Workers Organizing Committee was granted exclusive bargaining rights for all employees and the company renewed the contract expiring April 1 until August 4.

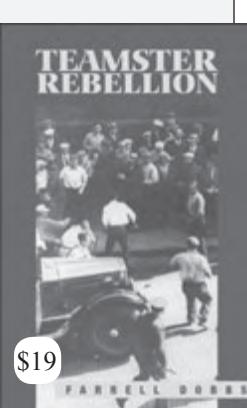
Within a few hours after the collapse of negotiations last Friday, members of the union peacefully took over the plants and service stations in Saginaw, Bay City, Flint and Lansing. Foremen and supervisors were ejected, but operations were maintained, with power still flowing throughout this vast industrial area.

Governor Frank Murphy promptly called a conference between the strikers and the company in Detroit, where the agreement was reached this Monday.

## Teamster Rebellion

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the union movement in Minneapolis and paved the way for union victories across the Midwest, recounted by a central leader of that battle.



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# Organized labor must fight for entire working class

*Below is an excerpt from The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The selection is from a February 1978 report by Barnes that was approved by the SWP National Committee. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

The next question we want to discuss is: What is the concrete character of this offensive against the industrial working class and what political response is needed? ...

When we talk about the social and political responsibilities of labor we explain the need to combat the ruling-class policy of imposing on the individual family the responsibility for social services that should be taken care of by society—the care of the young, the elderly, the sick and disabled. But that's not the only way capitalism works.

The employers also try to impose upon the individual workers responsibilities that should be met by society. And more and more they try to establish that these responsibilities will be met only according to the profitability of each worker's own boss. I leave aside the most grotesque single examples such as



In face of bosses' attacks, there is growing need for solidarity, and ultimately this working-class solidarity has to be worldwide, Barnes says. Above, mural dedicated by meat packers on strike against Hormel in Austin, Minn., to jailed anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela, May 1986.

the public-employee unions' officials sinking massive amounts of pension funds into city bonds in New York City. But more and more so-called general fringe benefits—pensions, health-care plans, supplemental unemployment benefits—all become contingent on the continuing profits of the boss you work for. We see this growing in industries like coal, steel, and auto.

These benefits are not won for the class as a whole, or even a section of the class. It's almost like a march back toward feudalism, not a march forward toward socialism. These fringes are good in good times—for workers who have them—because they're a substantial addition to everything else industrial workers can count on. But when the squeeze comes, this all begins to fall apart. Your pension funds are threatened. Your health-care plans are dismantled. The supplemental unemployment benefits run out. And the squeeze is on.

This is the payoff when the debt of business unionism comes due. This is the price paid for the class-collaborationist policy of refusing to fight for the real needs of the class—the social security of the class, national health care, for national unemployment insurance that's real and high enough, for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay, for protection against inflation, and for independent working-class political action. This is the price paid for a bureaucracy that says independent social and political struggles are secondary, and says the employers' promises in the contract are decisive.

This is the payoff for the refusal of the labor bureaucracy to fight for the broad social needs of the working class and to build a political instrument to fight for them. And this is what raises the labor party question in a new way. This concretizes it in a new and more understandable way, because now these problems are immediately facing the section of the working class that thought they were the least vulnerable and had the best deal.

Another thing that is happening in this offensive is a conscious attack on trade union democracy. *The right to strike* becomes a special target of the employers. Other restrictions are institutionalized, such as lengthy probationary periods that give the bosses a chance to weed out union militants, "troublemakers" of all kinds. Speedup and the erosion of safety and health protection on the job, are more and more a factor. Incentive pay and piecework plans are introduced in one form or another. Schemes like the Experimental Negotiating Agreement in steel with its no-strike pledge are generalized as much as possible. And arbitration procedures are put into every nook and cranny of every contract, tying the workers' hands and leaving them without the right to use their strength to fight back. In this way class collaboration becomes institutionalized.

Class collaboration isn't simply a program or an attitude of bureaucrats. Class collaboration takes the form of institutions that tie the individual worker hand and foot, that make a worker dependent

on someone other than the power of his or her co-workers and class. Trade union democracy of any kind, union control of conditions and pace of work, individual workers' rights on the job, are more and more opposed by the employer. The right to know, the right to vote on contracts, the right to elect your stewards and officers—these things can less and less be afforded by the employers. And they can less and less be tolerated by the union bureaucracy as well.

Finally, of course, class collaboration is the total dependence on the political parties and social programs of the employers.

A third thing that happens as a result of the offensive is the growing need for *solidarity*. That's become clearer in the struggles of the last couple years. Solidarity becomes crucial to success in the struggles that are breaking out. Each of these struggles, like the one on the Iron Range, like the coal miners today, turns into a political fight for the minds of the working class. Not only of the workers who are on strike but of the entire class. The strikers must appeal for support, and the employers, the government, must try to prevent that support, must whip up opposition.

This is not only the source of the need for solidarity, it's also the source of the need for internationalism. Because ultimately class solidarity has to be worldwide. It has to take up and oppose ruling-class policies such as protectionism, deportation of undocumented workers, chauvinistic "Buy American" campaigns, and so on.

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# 'It is only through international solidarity and action that we will bring our compañeros home'

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN  
AND ELLIE GARCÍA

HAVANA—This meeting is part of the worldwide effort demanding that U.S. President Barack Obama "order the immediate, unconditional release of Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, and Fernando, and end the crude sequestration of René," said Ricardo Alarcón, a member of the Cuban Communist Party's Political Bureau and outgoing president of Cuba's National Assembly.

Alarcón was speaking at the Feb. 21 presentation of a new edition of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. The book is a selection from the 200 some articles published in the *Militant* since the fight for the freedom of the five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries began more than 14 years ago.

The event, attended by nearly 100 people, was part of the February 14-24 Havana International Book Fair. It was sponsored by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and held at ICAP's Friendship House in the heart of Havana.

The speakers platform also included Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the five imprisoned Cubans; Rev. Raúl Suárez, director of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press. Waters, along with Martín Koppel, is co-editor of the book, published by Pathfinder Press in English and Spanish. Excerpts from the speakers' remarks appear on the following two pages.

ICAP President Kenia Serrano, who chaired the meeting, welcomed



Militant/Linda Joyce

"This meeting is part of the worldwide effort to demand President Obama immediately and unconditionally release Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando and René," said Ricardo Alarcón, Cuba's National Assembly president, at Feb. 21 panel. Above, part of audience.

the participation of Mirta Rodríguez and Magali Llort, mothers of Antonio Guerrero and of Fernando González.

Among the special invited guests was José Luis Palacio, who served in Angola under Gerardo Hernández. Three of the Cuban Five—Hernández, René González, and Fernando González—

volunteered for Cuba's 1975-91 internationalist mission in Angola. Palacio, whose account of the Angola experience appears in the book, traveled to the event from his hometown in Pinar del Río, western Cuba. Reticent to join the speakers platform, Palacio was eager to recount his experiences to *Militant* regarding

porters after the meeting (see below).

Dánim Pérez, director of the Museum of the Battle of Ideas in Cárdenas, a city east of Havana, mounted an exhibit at the event of photos and other items related to the Angola missions of Hernández and Fernando González. The display included the diary Hernández kept in Angola and González's military uniform.

Serrano noted several other books on or by the Cuban Five presented at this year's Havana book fair. They included *Enigmas y otras conversaciones* (Enigmas and other conversations), a collection of poetry and letters exchanged between Antonio Guerrero and numerous Cuban artists and writers; *La verdad me nombra* (The truth names me), a bilingual compilation of poems by Guerrero with an introduction by René González and illustrations by Hernández; and *Los últimos soldados de la Guerra Fría* (The last soldiers of the Cold War), a Spanish translation of a book by Brazilian writer Fernando Morais.

The ICAP president thanked Pathfinder for its "unceasing efforts to punch holes in the wall of silence" surrounding the case, including publication of *The Cuban Five*. Together with another Pathfinder title presented at the book fair, *Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own*, it "brings together their rich experiences in our sister lands of Africa, especially Angola," she said. Angola was the book

**Continued on page 10**

## 'I'm proud of what our lieutenant did and of what he continues to do today'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
AND TOM BAUMANN

HAVANA—Sgt. José Luis Palacio Cuní served from 1989 to 1991 as a squad leader in a 12-man reconnaissance platoon in Cabinda, the northernmost province of Angola. The platoon was led by Lt. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, today known around the world as one of the Cuban Five. Hernández is serving two life sentences in a U.S. penitentiary

### INTERVIEW WITH JOSÉ LUIS PALACIO

on trumped-up charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and murder.

Hernández and Palacio were among the 375,000 Cubans who volunteered for military duty in Angola between 1975 and 1991. The Cuban internationalists fought alongside the armed forces of the newly independent nation of Angola—which had just overturned nearly five centuries of Portuguese colonial rule—to defeat repeated invasions by the armed forces of the South African apartheid regime and its allies.

The *Militant* spoke with Palacio at a Feb. 21 presentation in Havana of the book *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should be Free* (see above).

Today Palacio is a member of the



Internationalist mission in Angola "strengthened us in our fight to defend the Cuban Revolution today," said José Luis Palacio. Above, Sgt. Palacio, standing, with members of scouting platoon in Cabinda, Angola. At right, Lt. Gerardo Hernández Nordelo.

Communist Party of Cuba and a refrigeration mechanic who works in a cold-storage warehouse in Pinar del Río, western Cuba. He recounted his Angola experiences in a 2006 interview first published in the Pinar del Río newspaper *Guerrillero*. That interview—"Twelve Men and Two Cats: With Gerardo Hernández and His Platoon in Angola"—is reprinted in *The Cuban Five*, published by Pathfinder Press.

Accompanied by Sergio Abreu, president of the Pinar del Río branch of the

Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), Palacio traveled to Havana to attend the February 21 book presentation. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

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MARTÍN KOPPEL: You were 28 years old when you left for Angola, a member of the UJC [Union of Young Communists] at that time. What did Cuba's internationalist mission in

**Continued on page 11**

## Speakers at Havana event



Militant/Tom Baumann

Panelists at the Feb. 21 Havana presentation of *The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free*. From left: Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, one of the Cuban Five; moderator Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP); Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press; Ricardo Alarcón, member of the Cuban Communist Party's Political Bureau and outgoing president of Cuba's National Assembly; and Raúl Suárez, director of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana. Excerpts from the speakers' remarks, translated by the *Militant*, appear on this page.

## 'Fight for their freedom is inextricable part of sharpening class struggle in United States'

Pathfinder had two objectives above all in producing this book, which is as much a work in progress as our struggle itself.

The first aim is to explain what many

### MARY-ALICE WATERS

who first learn of the Cuban Five find inexplicable. Despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, why were our five comrades convicted by U.S. federal courts on all charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage and, in the case of Gerardo, conspiracy to commit murder?

Why do the U.S. rulers so fear the example of the Cuban Revolution that they have locked away these exemplary human beings for a total of 83 years plus two lifetimes for Gerardo?

The answer starts with the Cuban Revolution itself and the example you have given the world of the capacity of the toilers—when they have a leadership forged in struggle, a leadership they deserve—to change the course of history. . . .

The second aim is to help working people and youth in the U.S. connect the "justice" meted out to each of the five by the U.S. cops, courts and prisons to

their own life experiences at the hands of that same class system. To recognize the common web of "justice" dispensed above all to those who resist, who refuse to break, who refuse "to own their crime," who refuse to deny their own humanity and worth. . . .

It is the unbroken dignity, integrity and steadfastness in face of this system of capitalist "justice" that win the respect of working people across the U.S.—including their fellow inmates—as they learn the truth about our five comrades.

The fight to free the Five is inextricably part of what can only be a sharpening class struggle in the U.S. in the years to come. And we say to workers attracted to their example: what we need here in the U.S. and elsewhere is a party made up of men and women like the Cuban Five. Join with us and let's work together to build that kind of party. . . .

I want to end by telling you about two things that will be added to the next edition of *The Cuban Five*. They reveal a great deal about the qualities of Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando, and René—the kind of human beings, the kind of revolutionaries, they are.

One is an interview with Rodolfo Rodríguez, "Rody," as he is known to others, a Cuban of the Mariel generation who was one of René's fellow inmates for seven years at the Federal Correctional Institution in Marianna, Fla. Like René, Rody is currently on parole. His tribute to René is one of the most powerful testimonies to the character of the five heroes I have ever read. I'll give you just a taste.

In a radio interview with journalist Edmundo García on Radio Progreso in Miami last year, Rody described how he first became friends with René in 2004.

I was introduced to René by a fellow prisoner in the following way: "Hey, man. Let me introduce you to the spy." Everyone called them spies, even

**Continued on page 10**



Above: Militant/Lea Sherman. Left: Bruce Dixon  
Working people in U.S. can identify "justice" meted out to Cuban Five with their own life experiences at hands of cops, courts and prisons, said Waters. "It is the Five's unbroken dignity, integrity and steadfastness in face of this system of capitalist 'justice' that win the respect of working people across the U.S., including fellow inmates." Above, rally outside California Department of Corrections against solitary confinement and other inhumane prison conditions, July 2011. Left, similar action outside Georgia Department of Corrections in Forsyth, July 2012.



## 'Letting the people know the truth'

I want to express to Mary-Alice [Waters] and the compañeros of Pathfinder and the *Militant* our appreciation for this book and the work the *Militant* has been doing over all these years. They are making an important contribution to letting the people of the United States know the truth about the case of the five compañeros, who were jailed nearly 15 years ago for fighting against terrorism.

This book also lets us get to know them as human beings—especially

### RICARDO ALARCÓN

through their participation in the struggle of the Angolan people against the South African racists.

Our compañeros, who are Heroes of the Republic of Cuba, are also heroes of the Republic of Angola and of the Republic of Namibia, as well as heroes of the African National Congress in South Africa. The governments and political forces leading those countries are aware of the contribution they made to help Angola consolidate its independence, to help Namibia put an end to colonialism, and to allow the people of South Africa to finish off the racist system of apartheid and establish a democratic society. . . .

The five are an example—and they should be seen as an example here, within Cuba, as well—in our battle against racism. What greater way to fight racism than to face the South African troops themselves in the trenches, on the battlefield, and that is what they did!

I would also like to salute my brother Raúl Suárez and the very important work being done by the Cuban ecumenical movement and our churches to unleash a solidarity movement that goes beyond formulas and stereotypes. A movement that is able to reach the hearts of people both inside and outside Cuba. . . .

The center of the legal and political battle today is to force the U.S. government to reveal what it has been hiding

## Learn more about Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, René González



Gerardo Hernández



Ramón Labañino



Antonio Guerrero



Fernando González



René González

**the CUBAN FIVE**

Who they are  
Why they were framed  
Why they should be free



¡CLARO QUE CUBA DUELE!

Cartoon by Gerardo Hernández, 2003  
Victorville US Penitentiary, California

3rd EDITION

FROM THE PAGES OF THE 'MILITANT'

# People of the US about the five'

for 17 years now. It refuses to release the U.S. satellite images of the incident of Feb. 24, 1996 [the shootdown of the Brothers to the Rescue planes that took off from southern Florida]. They haven't done so for a very simple reason: the images prove that the incident on that date took place within Cuban airspace. Consequently, what the U.S. government has done to the five compañeros is not only unjust. Not only were their sentences excessive, but the court did not even have the right to accept the charge brought against Gerardo. The matter was beyond the jurisdiction of the court.

Now we are at a decisive, final stage in the legal process, the so-called habeas corpus appeals. The heart of Gerardo's habeas corpus appeal is to demand that the U.S. government release the satellite images. And allow Gerardo to appear before the court to argue his case, to prove the so-called evidence used against him is absolutely made-up.

The appeals also demand that they be allowed to introduce evidence on the payments the U.S. government made to Miami journalists to create that "perfect storm" of prejudice and hostility against the five, as a U.S. court called it in 2005. . .

What more can we do? That question should pursue all Cuban men and women like a gypsy curse. What more can we do to bring them home? All of them, including Gerardo. The other four compañeros at least have a release date, however unjust and far in the future it may be. Gerardo doesn't even have that. . .

We need to ask ourselves what more we can do in order to force President Obama to do what he is morally obligated to do, and what he is politically and legally able to do: to order the immediate, unconditional release of Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, and Fernando, and to end the crude sequestration of René.

For that reason we thank the compañeros of Pathfinder and the *Militant* and all those in the U.S. who persist in this effort to spread the truth.

## Gerández, Ramón Labañino, o González, René González

"We are five soldiers, conscious and proud occupants of a trench. Five men who have chosen to stand up for something rather than fall for nothing."

**RENÉ GONZÁLEZ**

"We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known."

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"When Gerardo is put in the 'hole' in prison," said Adriana Pérez, "my mind returns to when he and the other men slept in an underground dugout in Angola and had to take baths outdoors in the middle of the night." Above, Gerardo Hernández, right, in front of dugout.

## 'Thank you, Angola, for allowing us to know our comrades better'

... These two books—*Cuba and Angola: Fighting for Africa's Freedom and Our Own* and *The Cuban Five*—have particular relevance at this book fair, which is dedicated to Angola. They describe the experiences of

### ADRIANA PÉREZ

Gerardo, Fernando, and René in that country.

Gerardo left for Angola on July 14, 1989, the day before our first wedding

anniversary. It was the first time we'd been separated. Through all the letters and information we exchanged, I had the opportunity to share the Angola experience with him.

We were lucky, since it was the final stage of the war in Angola. There were risks involved, but it was nothing like the risks René may have faced when he carried out his mission from 1977 to 1979, or when Fernando was in Angola from 1987 to 1989.

Gerardo didn't complete the second

## 'Diverse religious institutions are united behind Cuban Five'

We are here, as we have been from the beginning, alongside the families of the Five. We are alongside our imprisoned brothers in the United States and, above all, alongside our people, who have waged a historic battle to free the Five. And just as we have won many other battles in our history, we will win this one, too.

### RAÚL SUÁREZ

Inspired by his faith, by his convictions, and by the strength of his struggle, Dr. Martin Luther King stood near the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 28, 1963, and dared to condemn the falseness of what—when Abraham Lincoln pronounced the abolition of slavery—could have been a great glory for the American people. Martin Luther King recalled that although slavery had been abolished, black Americans still were not free. He raised his prophetic voice to say, "I have a dream."

Our people, too, have been marching toward this shared dream—though not in the way the empire wants us to.

So they pay people to travel the world to try to globalize—not tenderness or brotherhood, much less the truth—but lies and falsehoods.

We don't need to use those methods. We promote dreams, not the nightmares the empire creates, as they've done with the Five.

Despite the history of our country, despite the history of discrimination and racism we inherited from capitalism, we have created something here. The diverse religious institutions of our people have united around the Five and their relatives to create a platform from which we reach out to the world to defend the Five and demand their freedom, turning the strength of our people into an ever greater force.

That is what we promised, and that is what we are doing.

year of his mission. The peace accords had been signed at the end of 1988, and in 1990 Namibia became independent. Cuban troops were being withdrawn by stages, and another group of graduates from the ISRI [Higher Institute for International Relations], where Gerardo had studied, was given the opportunity to go to Angola that final year.

For me it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There's no doubt the Angola mission—for Gerardo as much as for Fernando and René—was a school that helped prepare them for what lay ahead. It prepared them for the imprisonment they've been enduring for nearly 15 years.

Whenever Gerardo has been put in the "hole" [in U.S. prisons], especially those difficult moments when there was no communication between us, my mind returns to the experience in Angola. There Gerardo and the other men had to sleep in an underground dugout for six months; they took baths outdoors in the middle of the night.

Although Antonio and Ramón didn't go to Angola, they, too, went through the kind of training that prepared them to carry out their mission in the U.S. They had other responsibilities at that time.

Magali [Llort, mother of Fernando] and I had the good fortune to visit Angola and Namibia, and we have excellent memories of that visit. I always say that when Gerardo returns home, one of the countries he must visit is Namibia, a country with a small population and a big heart. A country that achieved independence in great part through the victory of the struggle in Angola.

We very much appreciate what the compañeros of Pathfinder are doing, because through these accounts you are making known the values these men stand for.

I ask all of you to help us spread this message: the human essence of who these five men are. They weren't bred in a laboratory. They weren't prefabricated. They are men who have the heart and the courage to do what they did—what they are still doing—and to continue contributing to the revolution.

Thank you, Angola, for being free, for being here with us at this book fair, and for allowing us, through your history, to know our own comrades better.



Prensa Latina/Vladimir Molina  
Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, at Feb. 21 Havana book fair event. "These five men weren't bred in a laboratory," Pérez said. "They are men with the heart and courage to do what they did—and are still doing."

# Integrity in face of capitalist 'justice'

## Continued from page 8

though they weren't. That's what they were charged with.

And that's how one of the friendships that has most changed my life began.

In Cuba, I was raised in a home with a lot of hostility toward the government of our country. Obviously, before I met René González I didn't think what I do now.

Right off the bat, I told him that I believe in God. I expected him to take me on, to start arguing with me.

What was his response? He said, "That's great! I don't. But I believe that a true Christian will want the best for humanity, and if my friendship with you helps you be a better Christian, I'll feel satisfied."

That's how an hour-long conversation with Rody begins, full of stories that show us how our comrades have conducted themselves in prison. How they have won the respect and admiration of fellow inmates as they carry out their revolutionary work on the front lines of the class struggle where they are, as part of some 2.3 million other workers behind bars in the United States.

## A favor not for them but ourselves'

The second piece I want to share with you is an exchange between Gerardo and the great Puerto Rican revolution-

ary Rafael Cancel Miranda. As many of you here today know, he and four other Puerto Rican patriots spent some 25 years in U.S. prisons for actions in defense of their country's independence.

Cancel Miranda was the principal speaker last Sept. 14 at a meeting in Washington, D.C., that marked the beginning of the 15th year of imprisonment of the Five. He gave a magnificent speech, beginning to end, that will be included in the next edition. Cancel Miranda began with the declaration:

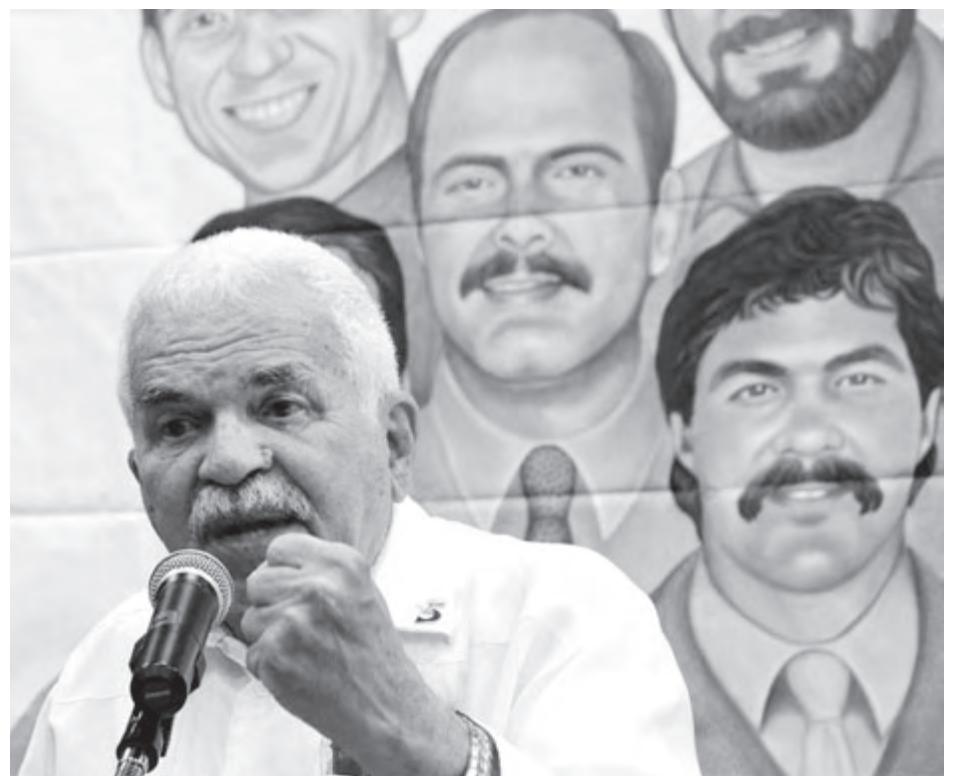
Why do we fight for the Five? Because we are fighting for ourselves. We're not doing *them* a favor. We're doing *ourselves* a favor, because we're fighting for our own freedom.

And he ended with the words:

I was 23 years old when I climbed the stairs of the Capitol building in Washington. Today I'm 82, and I haven't changed the way I think about anything. Except today I am perhaps a little more revolutionary—because I know the enemy better.

Today it's we who must thank the Five. We thank them for the example they give us.

The *Militant* transcribed and printed Cancel Miranda's speech, and Gerardo read it when he received that issue. A



Bill Hackwell

"Why do we fight for the Five?" asked Puerto Rican revolutionary Rafael Cancel Miranda, above, at September 2012 meeting in Washington, D.C., marking the beginning of their 15th year in prison. "Because we are fighting for ourselves, for our own freedom."

few weeks later we got a letter from Gerardo, commenting:

At the time of the September solidarity event in Washington, I had the opportunity to say hello to Rafael Cancel Miranda over the phone and reiterate the admiration of the Five for him; he has always been an example for us. We are grateful for the *Militant*'s valuable transcript of

his remarks, remarks that should go down in history.

Gerardo went on to tell the story of the Puerto Rican patriots' first visit to Cuba after their release in 1979, where they were welcomed, among others, by a group of Pioneers who presented them each with a scarf. "The young Pioneer who was asked to present the scarf to Rafael," wrote Gerardo, "is my wife Adriana! As we Cubans say, 'I get goose bumps' just telling the story!"

Knowing that Gerardo's words would mean a great deal to Cancel Miranda, we took the liberty of forwarding him Gerardo's letter. The very next day came his reply:

Many, many thanks for sending me a copy of the heartfelt letter from compañero Gerardo. I draw energy from the Five as well. No power exists that can defeat the spirit of Gerardo and his four compañeros, since they represent the power of the heroic Cuban people. Even in prison they are contributing to the liberation of our peoples.

The empire crashes against the determination of the Five. I send them the warmest greetings of thankfulness and brotherhood.

I can only add, Cancel Miranda's heartfelt words speak for us all.

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## Book on Cuban Five presented in Havana

### Continued from page 7

fair's country of honor this year.

"It's only through worldwide solidarity that we will bring our compañeros home," Serrano emphasized.

### To know them as human beings

Alarcón noted the importance of the work by the *Militant* and by Pathfinder not only "to let the people of the United States know the truth about the case" but to let them get to know the Five as human beings, including "their participation in the struggle of the Angolan

people against the South African racists."

The Cuban leader underscored the importance of that mission as part of the revolution's historic battle against racism. "What greater way to fight racism," he said, "than to face the South African troops themselves in the trenches, on the battlefield, as they did!"

Alarcón challenged the U.S. government to release its satellite images of the 1996 downing over Cuban airspace of two planes flown by members of the counterrevolutionary group Brothers

to the Rescue. Those images, he said, would give the lie to Washington's claim that the planes were shot down over international waters. That false assertion is part of their frame-up of Hernández, who was convicted on charges of espionage and murder conspiracy and given two life sentences plus 15 years for his alleged role in the shootdown.

Alarcón also demanded the U.S. government allow the introduction of new evidence that has come to light on its payments to Miami journalists whose articles stoked the atmosphere of bias against the Five during the 2001 trial. The satellite images and the payments are issues in current legal appeals by the Five.

Adriana Pérez highlighted the importance of Cuba's 16-year internationalist mission to help defend Angola against invasions by South Africa's white-

Continued on page 11



Militant/Linda Joyce  
Participants in Feb. 21 meeting snatch up copies of *The Cuban Five* after program. More than 1,000 copies were distributed in course of the Havana book fair and related events.

## Who are the Cuban Five?

Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González are Cuban revolutionaries who during the 1990s accepted assignments from the Cuban government to gather information on the activities of Cuban-American counterrevolutionary groups operating in southern Florida. These paramilitary outfits, organizing on U.S. soil with virtual impunity, have a long record of carrying out bombings, assassinations and other deadly attacks, both against targets in Cuba and supporters of the Cuban Revolution in the United States, Puerto Rico and elsewhere.

On Sept. 12, 1998, the five were arrested by the FBI. They were framed up and convicted on a variety of charges, which included acting as unregistered agents of the Cuban government and possession of false identity documents. Without a shred of evidence, three were charged with "conspiracy to gather and transmit national defense information."

Hernández was also convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based on the pretext that he bore responsibility for the Cuban government's 1996 shootdown of two aircraft flown by the counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue that had invaded Cuban airspace in disregard of Havana's repeated warnings. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years.

All but René González remain in prison. Since October 2011 he has been serving a three-year "supervised release." On the pretext of his dual citizenship, his request to return to Cuba has been denied. His wife, Olga Salanueva, is barred from entering the United States, as is Adriana Pérez, the wife of Hernández.

# 'Proud of our lieutenant'

Continued from page 7  
*Angola mean for you?*

JOSÉ LUIS PALACIO: I'm proud that this book about our five heroes brings together the experience we lived through in Angola.

Angola was the best school we could have gone through. We saw conditions there that don't exist in our country anymore. It made us prouder of the Cuban Revolution and strengthened us in our fight to defend the revolution today.

The Cuban mission helped Angola defend its independence. It brought the end of apartheid closer. It showed we're internationalists who will fight for a just cause anywhere in the world.

Many of us were just kids when we went to Angola. We knew little about the world. Over the years we've developed as revolutionaries and realize how much that mission helped us. It certainly helped me. And it helped Gerardo too.

I was sad when I first heard the news that my lieutenant Nordelo, as we affectionately called him, was imprisoned in the United States. But I'm proud of what he did, of what he is doing today. It's an inspiration. He knows I'll always be in the front trenches alongside him, in every cause we're fighting for in the world.

When the history of humanity is written, there will have to be a page for the five Cuban heroes. They're internationalist heroes, world heroes.

KOPPEL: *What can you tell us about Gerardo from your experiences working with him?*

PALACIO: The first thing I remember about Gerardo as a leader is that he treated us like brothers. He was always concerned about the men he was responsible for. He had the ability to sense when you had problems, if you were sad or troubled. "What's the matter? You feel bad?" he'd say. "Are you getting any letters from home? What's going on?"

He paid attention to detail. "We're going on patrol. Did you clean your rifle? Do you have your ammunition?" He was always on top of everything.

Nordelo never raised his voice. He never mistreated anyone. If you didn't understand something, if you did something the wrong way, he didn't get mad. He'd explain it again. "Try it this way, do it that way," he'd say. Until you knew it well. Until you could handle any task.

In the army there are always officers who are very formal in their approach, or who have a sharp temper. But not Nordelo. He was outgoing, good-humored. He never made anyone stand at attention while he chewed them out.

When he wanted to tell you that you'd done something wrong, he'd say:

"Hey, *pinareño* [native of Pinar del Río], come over here. Listen, man, this is what you did and it was wrong. What's up? Be sure not to do it again."

"No lieutenant, I won't do it again. I promise."

"Fine. Let's go play some baseball."

That's the way he was. That's why we respected him.

Nordelo loved to draw cartoons. He loved to read. And he especially liked to encourage others to read—reading opens the mind, he'd say. "If you don't want to go to school, don't go. But read. You'll get a better understanding of things."

TOM BAUMANN: *What kind of books did he read?*

PALACIO: He read a lot of revolutionary books—books by Che and others. When he found something on a page that related to us, he'd say, "Hey, come over here. Look at this. See what it says here."

The night before he left Angola, when his mission was finished, we organized a farewell for him. I remember the last thing he told us when he got in the truck.

"Guys, don't make me look bad," he said. "Always hold high the banner of the Cuban Revolution." I'll never forget that.

We all yelled, "Lieutenant!" as his truck left. We liked him a lot. And we never made him look bad.

KOPPEL: *What were relations like between Cubans and Angolans in the platoon?*

PALACIO: We had good relations. We were providing military training to the Angolans. And they wanted to learn. They knew we'd be leaving one day and they would remain.

In our platoon there were two men from the FAPLA [People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola], Basquito and Pembele. They'd been soldiers in the armed forces for many years. They were originally from southern Angola but were with us in Cabinda, in the north. They were just two more members of the reconnaissance unit, like the rest of us. They even spoke Spanish like Cubans!

KOPPEL: *How did you decide to go to Angola?*

PALACIO: I was recruited as a reservist. I was asked to go because I'd been trained as a tank artilleryman. At that time many tank crew members had returned, and we had to send replacements. The military committee here in Cuba selected me as one of them.

In Angola I didn't serve as an artilleryman. I was a member of the tank brigade in Cabinda, but I was assigned to the scouting platoon. Being black, I could blend in. I could be taken for an Angolan—a member of either UNITA [the force allied with South Africa] or the Angolan army.

KOPPEL: *You were asked to go, but you and other Cuban combatants in Angola went as volunteers, right?*

PALACIO: When you were called in by the military committee, they'd ask you, "Are you willing to carry out an internationalist mission?" If you said yes, fine. If you said no, fine.

I could have said no. I could have said I had to take care of my mother. That I had children. That I had such and such a situation and didn't want to go. Nothing would have happened. I would have gone on with my life. I know some



Militant/Tom Baumann

José Luis Palacio, center, traveled to Feb. 21 event in Havana from Cuba's Pinar del Río province along with Sergio Abreu, left, local president of ICAP. Gerardo Hernández, Palacio's commander during Angola mission, "knows I'll always be in the front trenches alongside him, in every cause we're fighting for," Palacio told *Militant* reporter Martín Koppel, right.

who said, "No, look, I'm not going," and today they have leadership responsibilities.

I went to Angola, first and foremost, because I was a member of the Union of Young Communists. I have my principles. "Of course, I'll go," I said.

When I returned from meeting with the military committee, my father asked me, "So, what did you tell them?"

"I said yes."

"That's good," he said.

If I had said no . . . !

BAUMANN: *Was your father a party member?*

PALACIO: My father, now deceased, was not a party member, but he supported the revolution. He was a Christian. My mother is a Christian too. She supports the revolution. They both understood the cause we were fighting for.

They agreed with my going.

KOPPEL: *What kind of work did your parents do?*

PALACIO: My father was an electrician. My mother was a nurse in a hospital in Pinar del Río. She's now retired.

When I was getting ready to leave Pinar del Río to come here for the book presentation, my mother said, "It's wonderful that they invited you!" She'll be even prouder when I bring her this book.

It's a matter of pride for any Cuban to have been in Angola. There were 50,000 volunteers there when I was, and all of us contributed our little grain of sand to the internationalist cause. I'm proud to have given my grain of sand.

And I'm very proud to have served under the command of Gerardo Hernández Nordelo.

## Havana event on Cuban 5 book

Continued from page 10

supremacist regime, and what it meant for Cubans who took part in it. Through Gerardo's letters, she too had a chance to share the Angola experience, which helped prepare Gerardo, Fernando, and René "to withstand the rigors of prison" in the U.S. for the past 15 years, Pérez said.

Rev. Suárez spoke of efforts by "the diverse religious institutions of our people that have come together" to press for the release of the Cuban Five. In introducing the Baptist pastor, Serrano applauded the Martin Luther King Center, Cuban Council of Churches, and other religious groups here for an initiative called the Cuban Pastoral Platform for the Reunification of the Families of the Five and the Unity of the Cuban Family.

Through it they reach out to church congregations in the United States especially, seeking to win them to the campaign to free the Five.

### Case strikes chord with workers

Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, told participants that the frame-up and imprisonment of the Five has its roots in Washington's decades-long course of seeking to punish the Cuban people "for your audacity and unbroken determination to prevent the most powerful empire in history from reestablishing its dominion here."

The fight for freedom of the Five is

part of the class struggle in the U.S. today, she said. It finds a ready audience among millions of working people who have firsthand experience with the class "justice" meted out by the U.S. cops, courts and prisons.

Waters explained that 97 percent of men and women serving time in U.S. federal prisons today have never been tried and convicted of any crime. "They were railroaded to jail without trial after being blackmailed into pleading guilty to some crime, often different from the one they were arrested for," she said. This is the process cynically misnamed "plea bargaining."

Because of these experiences, the "courage, dignity, integrity, and unbroken resistance of our five brothers" strike a chord among working people who learn about the case, Waters noted.

As a result, she reported, hundreds of copies of *The Cuban Five* have been sold in recent months as supporters of the *Militant* go door to door in working-class neighborhoods, talking with fellow workers about the ongoing capitalist economic crisis and what working people can do to respond.

The Havana presentation of *The Cuban Five* was featured on national TV news that evening and widely covered in the Cuban press.

During the book festival and related events, more than 1,000 copies of the book were sold, or donated to libraries, schools and organizations working for the freedom of the Five.



# Join April 1 miners' rally in W.Va.

Class-conscious working people, not only miners, should turn out for the April 1 rally in Charleston, W.Va., to support the fight by the United Mine Workers of America against Patriot Coal's moves to throw retirees under the bus and tear up union contracts. This struggle is one important example of standing up to the bosses' war on working people today.

This issue of the *Militant* includes two other examples.

The Postal Service is pressing to end Saturday delivery and close hundreds of facilities, most in rural areas and working-class neighborhoods. These moves will slash thousands of jobs and cut public services working people rely on.

With the taste of blood in their mouths, New York school bus companies announced the abolition of two weeks' paid vacation, a 7.5 percent wage cut, higher health insurance costs and layoffs.

The battle against Patriot unfolds as coal bosses' union-busting and "productivity" drive has resulted in eight coal miners being killed on the job in less than three months.

The propertied rulers have no solution to or control over the worldwide crisis of capitalism, rooted in a historic slowdown in production and trade. Their only answer is to go after the working class, which they will continue to do to no end until we mount an effective

fight against them.

Today we face two challenges. One is the discouraging effects of persistently high unemployment. A recovery in hiring, which no one can predict in scope or timing, will help boost the confidence, unity and combativity of workers. This is why Socialist Workers candidates across the country call on working people to fight for a government-funded public works program to put millions to work building things workers need.

The other major challenge is the weakness of the labor movement—the result of decades of misleadership that has sought common ground with the bosses and their political parties, most often the Democrats. This poses the need to organize independently of the bosses and their government in the political arena as we fight against assaults on our wages, working conditions, safety, unions and very dignity.

It's through working-class battles today and many more to come that workers can gain experience and confidence, forge links among ourselves, begin to transform our unions into fighting weapons that champion the interests of all working people, and in the process build a class-struggle leadership and advance the fight for a workers and farmers government.

We look forward to seeing you in Charleston.

# Cyprus crisis: workers to bear the brunt

**Continued from front page**

country's banking system.

Such a move would have amounted to "stealing money officially," writes David Pryce-Jones in a March 18 *National Review* article, "what's more, stealing from people in Cyprus who are mostly not well off."

Thousands took to the streets in Cyprus to protest this move. Then the Cypriot parliament voted unanimously to reject the tax and the troika backed off. Instead, Cyprus government officials agreed to a new deal restructuring the country's two largest banks—Laiki Bank and the Bank of Cyprus. Laiki will close, with smaller deposits and some other assets transferred to the Bank of Cyprus. Among the immediate consequences is the elimination of thousands of bank workers' jobs and pensions.

Insured deposits under \$130,000 remain intact—although still unavailable—while larger deposits and investments are either entirely or partially wiped out.

A large portion of the banks' larger depositors and creditors are Russian "oligarchs," as much of the press refers to big Russian capitalists. This relatively new bourgeoisie came into existence by plundering previously state-owned industries and other property following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and is regarded with a degree of contempt by the ruling families of Europe. According to some estimates, Russian companies and individuals, including government officials, account for one-third of the deposits—about \$33 billion.

Reaching agreement on the current stop-gap measure was fraught with disagreements within the troika and among the governments that stand behind it. In a departure from previous "bailout" plans, the government of Germany, the strongest economic power of Europe, pressed to impose some losses on bondholders, big depositors and investors.

"The agreement closely resembles a proposal advocated by the IMF and Berlin," wrote the *Financial Times*, "though under that plan both Laiki and Bank of Cyprus would have been liquidated."

Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea, south of Turkey, with a population of 1.1 million. Eighty percent of its economy is comprised of the service sector—mostly real estate and financial services. Industry comprises almost one-fifth of the economy, including cement and gypsum production, ship repair, textiles, and metal products. Cyprus' banking sector is about eight times the size of its gross domestic product. The country has served as a haven for offshore banking and money laundering, tax free

and with few regulations. The days of dependence on large infusions of money capital from abroad—with no relation to domestic production—are over.

## Gov't to set controls on bank withdrawals

The measures implemented and considered in response to the banking crisis pose an immediate threat of bank runs by domestic and foreign account holders in Cyprus. The government is set to impose indefinite controls on withdrawals and other transactions when the banks reopen, expected for March 28. With the banks closed for the past 12 days, many workers tried to get their funds out through ATMs. The two largest banks, accounting for half the deposits in the country, restricted maximum withdrawals to \$335, then lowered it to \$130. Electronic fund transfers were barred.

Cyprus has been in recession for the past year. Its economy is expected to shrink by 20 to 30 percent in the next few years, reported the *New York Times*.

Cyprus' government debt still stands at 140 percent of gross domestic product and banks not only face massive deposit withdrawals, but more looming loan defaults with deflation of the country's massive real estate bubble.

Cyprus, like other countries that use the euro, can't devalue its currency in response to massive indebtedness as a capitalist nation with its own currency would normally do. But recent developments have made clear that a "Cypriot euro"—held in Cypriot banks—is in fact worth less than a "German euro."

Cyprus became a member of the EU in 2004 after Athens threatened to block admittance of east European countries if Cyprus was not admitted. It adopted the euro as its currency in 2008. Its two biggest banks are the largest holders of Greek bonds in Europe and sustained huge losses as part of the troika's loan agreement with Greece.

The ramifications of the crisis and its "resolution" are being felt well beyond Cyprus' borders. "No amount of declarations that Cyprus is unique will restore the trust in their banks for Italians or Spaniards or Portuguese when the crisis again reaches an acute phase in their countries, as it inevitably will," stated *Marketwatch*.

## Correction

The article "With New Pope, Church Seeks Greater Political Influence in World" in issue no. 12 reported the new pope's name as José Mario Bergoglio. His name is Jorge Mario Bergoglio.

# Postal workers

**Continued from front page**

The actions were called in response to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe's February announcement that six-day delivery for everything but packages would end in August of this year.

Although since 1981 Congress has required the Postal Service to deliver mail six days a week, Donahoe said the law no longer requires that all services be provided because previous language was not included in a new spending resolution. Some legislators dispute this interpretation.

Donahoe says the move will save the Postal Service \$2 billion a year. The post office had a \$15.9 billion deficit in 2012.

Union officials have tried to argue that the cuts won't make the Postal Service more profitable. Instead they have lobbied Congress without success to end a mandate on funding retiree health benefits for decades in advance, which they say has cost the Postal Service \$32 billion since 2007.

The Postal Service has eliminated more than 193,000 jobs since 2006, according to the Letter Carriers union. In May last year, post office bosses said they planned to close 229 facilities by 2014, 92 this year, most in rural areas or working-class neighborhoods.

"They've been attacking other workers drastically and now they are coming after us with guns blazing," APWU Local 917 President Richard Cantu told the *Militant*. "They are consolidating mail centers, closing post offices and trying to privatize the post office."

The cuts "affect the younger generation," noted Vicki Eady, a Los Angeles mail handler. "I'm almost ready to retire, but those of us who retire, get injured on the job or get fired are not replaced. So there are less people at the same productivity rate."

In New York some 800 rallied at the main post office.

"This is about American greed," said James Moore, a clerk at New York's Morgan post office in Midtown. "Look at how the bus companies and Mayor Michael Bloomberg attacked the school bus drivers. Now we are under attack. They tell workers 'do more with less.'"

Milagros Cancel, member of Parents to Improve School Transportation, which supported city school bus drivers who recently ended a one-month strike, joined the New York action. "We have to support the postal workers," said Cancel. "I have three children with impediments. It is important to support services like the post office and school bus drivers."

Erline McWillis has worked 31 years as a clerk at the Triborough station in Upper Manhattan.

"Contracting out of jobs of tractor trailer drivers, mail carriers and clerks has gone on for about three years," she said. "They are trying to get old-timers and permanent workers out. They cut the pay of contract workers by half with no health insurance until after one year. The union is here to protect you, to protect our jobs."

Carmen Ortiz, a letter carrier in Oakland, was one of hundreds at the San Francisco rally. She said that the push for five-day delivery is just the latest of many attacks on post office workers, including attacks on wages, benefits and working conditions that have hit new hires the hardest. "It's not just what's happening at the post office, but I'm here in response to all the things they are taking away from us," she added.

"I'm hoping for larger turnouts in the future," said Danetta Logan, one of four letter carriers who subscribed to the *Militant* during the San Francisco protest. "We need more of us involved."

"Their aim is to lay off 20 percent of the workforce, some 200,000 workers," said Bob Garron, who works out of the Miami Beach facility.

"In the postal service and in manufacturing they have workers backed into a corner. We can't just take it. We have to fight back at some point," postal worker Eric Brown, said at the Atlanta protest.

Janice Lynn in Atlanta, Anthony Dutrow in Miami, Dan Fein and Deborah Liatos in New York and Betsy Stone in San Francisco contributed to this article.